REPORT

OF THE

Executive Committee

OF THE

New York Civil-Service Reform Association

READ AT THE ANNUAL MEETING, MAY 7, 1888.

NEW YORK:
PUBLISHED FOR THE
CIVIL-SERVICE REFORM ASSOCIATION
1888.

Publications of
The National Civil-Service Reform League.

Proceedings at the Annual Meeting of the National Civil-Service Reform League, 1882, with address by George William Curtis Per copy, 10 cts. Per 100, ... $7 50

The same for 1884. Per copy, 10 cts. Per 100, . . $7 50

The same for 1885. Per copy, 10 cts. Per 100, . . $7 50

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The Year's Work in Civil-Service Reform. (Address of 1884.) By George William Curtis. Per copy, 3 cts. Per 100, . $2 50

Civil-Service Reform under the present National Administration. (Address of 1885.) By George William Curtis. Per copy, 3 cts. Per 100, ... $2 50

The Situation. (Address of 1886.) By George William Curtis. Per copy, 3 cts. Per 100 . . . . . $2 50

Address to the Voters of the United States. By George William Curtis. Per copy, 1 ct. Per 100, ... 75 cts.

The Selection of Laborers. By James M. Bugbee of the Mass. C. S. Commission. Per copy, 2 cts. Per 100, . . . $1 25

The same in German. Per copy, 2 cts. Per 100 . . . $1 25

Report of the Special Committee on the present Condition of the Reform Movement, March 16, 1887. Per copy, 8 cts Per 100, ... $5.00

Address to the Clergy of all denominations.

Constitution of the National Civil-Service Reform League.

Also a few copies of some early publications.

PUBLICATIONS OF THE NEW YORK CIVIL-SERVICE REFORM ASSOCIATION.

II. **The Beginning of the Spoils System in the National Government, 1829-30.** (Reprinted, by permission, from Parton's "Life of Andrew Jackson.") Per copy, 5 cts. Per 100, $3 00

III. **The Spoils System and Civil-Service Reform in the Custom-House and Post-Office at New York.** By Dorman B. Eaton. 136 pages, 8vo. Per copy, 15 cts. Per 100, . . $10 00

IV. **Civil-Service Reform in the New York Custom-House.** By Willard Brown. Per copy, 5 cts. Per 100, . . . $3 00

V. **Term and Tenure of Office.** By Dorman B. Eaton. Per copy, 25 cts. Second edition, abridged. Per copy, 15 cts. Per 100, . $10 00

VII. **The Danger of an Office-Holding Aristocracy.** By E. L. Godkin. Per copy, 5 cts. Per 100, . . . $3 00

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REPORT

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PROGRESS in any reform movement is rarely continuous at a fixed rate, and indeed is seldom made without intervals of at least apparent, if not real retrogression. The movement for a reform of the Civil Service is no exception to this general rule, and after a progressive period of unexpected duration, we have reached one when we are forced as it were to "mark time." Administrative officers have taken advantage of the occupation of the public mind by other questions, to do some things in contravention of the letter of the law, and many things in conflict with its spirit. Yet the public knowledge of the reform movement and appreciation of its necessity are constantly widening. At such a period above all, the usefulness of the Associations formed for its support is most strongly shown.

At the Annual meeting of this Association held on the 5th of May, 1887, the following officers were elected:

President.

GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS.

Vice-Presidents.

JOHN JAY,
CARL SCHURZ,
CHAS. S. FAIRCHILD,
ORLANDO B. POTTER,
WILLIAM E. DODGE,
ROSWELL D. HITCHCOCK,
OSWALD OTTENDORFER,
HORACE E. DEMING.

Executive Committee.

EVERETT P. WHEELER, Chairman.

SILAS W. BURT,
EDWARD CARY,
CHARLES COLLINS,
GEO. WALTON GREEN,
ELIAL F. HALL,
WALTER HOWE,
A. R. MACDONOUGH,
DANIEL MAGONE,
GEO. HAVEN PUTNAM,
THEODORE ROOSEVELT,
EDWARD M. SHEPHARD,
HENRY L. SPRAGUE,
WM. H. THOMSON,
F. W. WHITRIDGE.

At the meeting of the Executive Committee held immediately thereafter, Mr. Wheeler was unanimously re-elected Chairman, Mr. Potts was re-elected Secretary and Mr. Bursley was re-elected Treasurer, and the several Standing Committees were reconstituted as follows:

Publication Committee.

HORACE WHITE, Chairman,
E. L. GODKIN,
GEO. WILLIAM CURTIS,
E. WINCHESTER DONALD,
WILLIAM POTTS.

Committee on Legislation.

FRED. W. WHITRIDGE, Chairman,
GEO. WALTON GREEN,
CARL SCHURZ,
FRANCIS L. STETSON,
EVERETT P. WHEELER.

Auditing Committee.

Committee on Finance.

IRA BURSLEY, Chairman, EDWARD B. MERRILL,
D. WILLIS JAMES, J. HAMPDEN ROBB,
ANSON PHELPS STOKES.

Committee on Affiliated Societies.

GEO. W. VAN SICLEN, Chairman, WILLIAM POTTS,
JACOB F. MILLER, ALEX. MACKAY-SMITH,
HENRY T. TERRY.

Committee on Civil-Service Examinations.

EDWARD CARY, Chairman, A. R. MACDONOUGH,
DORMAN B. EATON, CARL SCHURZ,
H. B. B. STAPLER.

A vacancy in the list of Vice-Presidents was created during the year by the death of Dr. Hitchcock, an earnest friend of reform. Dr. Hitchcock was made a Vice-President at the election held May 29, 1877, was rechosen on the reorganization of the Association in 1880, and continued to hold that position until the date of his death.

On the 2nd of November Mr. Collins resigned from the Auditing Committee and Mr. E. F. Hall was chosen in his place and on the 4th of April Mr. Tompkins resigned from the same Committee and his place was filled by the selection of Mr. Collins.

On the 20th of June Mr. Potts, having reluctantly accepted the position of Chief Examiner of the State Civil-Service Commission, resigned the Secretaryship of the Association. The supervision of the work of the office was undertaken successively by Mr. Collins and Mr. Stapler, who kindly volunteered their services. They were assisted by Mr. A. E. Walradt, who was elected Assistant Secretary on the 2nd of November, and continued to serve until Jan. 10, 1888. On the 29th of December the remaining members of the original State Civil-Service Commission, Messrs. Jay and Richmond, having been removed by the Gov-

ernor, and a new Commission consisting of Gen. Daniel E. Sickles, and Messrs. George H. Treadwell and James H. Manning having been appointed in their place, this Commission immediately removed Mr. Potts from the position of Chief Examiner; and at the meeting of this Committee held on the 4th of January, he was unanimously re-elected Secretary of the Association.

The list of local Secretaries has been slightly extended during the year, and now stands as follows:

George T. Lyman,.....Bellport, Suffolk County.
Rev. Dr. R. B. Fairbairn.....Annandale, Dutchess County.
Everett Case..... Lansingburg, Rensselaer County.
Joseph K. Murray.....Flushing, Queens County.
Hon. Isaac L. Hunt, Jr.....Adams, Jefferson County.
William F. Peck .....Rochester, Munroe County.

These gentlemen have given us much aid by keeping us informed in regard to local matters, and the general feeling touching the reform movement.

At the date of the last Annual meeting the Finance Committee was engaged in obtaining subscriptions to a guarantee fund of $1500 per annum for the period of two years. The list was completed early in the year, but we are glad to say that no call upon the subscribers has yet been needed, and that the Treasurer's account shows a balance somewhat greater than that at the beginning of the year. A large number of members being delinquent in the payment of dues, it was voted at the meeting of the Committee held in February to drop from the roll on the 1st of May the names of such as previous to that time should fail to respond to a circular calling their attention to the delinquency and offering upon payment of one year's dues to extend their membership to May 1, 1889. A considerable number of members responded to the circular when issued, but this action of the Committee will result in some reduction in the nominal membership of the Association.

The Committee has continued to subscribe for copies of the useful Civil Service Record for distribution among the members of the Association and it has also subscribed for copies to be placed upon the files of Reading-rooms and Clubs which have expressed their willingness to accept it.

A subscription for a number of copies of the *Civil Service Reformer* made a year ago, was at the suggestion of the publishers of that periodical not renewed this year, but instead a circular was addressed to our members encouraging individual subscriptions.

During the political campaign candidates for office were questioned as heretofore, and circulars were also addressed to the holders of state and municipal offices, calling their attention to the provisions of the law regarding political assessments. We have reason to believe however that there has been a considerable revival of this nefarious business, and that the same is true to a degree in the field of the national service. What measures may be necessary to compel obedience to the law in this regard, will require careful and deliberate consideration.

The Supervisory Board of this City continues as organized last year, and has recently occupied more commodious quarters at the Cooper Union. While conscious that much remains to be done to cover perfectly even the field now occupied by the work of the Municipal Commission this work is believed to be well and faithfully done, and to be improving in form and substance. The reports of the Supervisory Board, copies of which can be obtained from its Secretary, Mr. Lee Phillips, always contain much matter of interest to those active in this movement.

The very unfortunate experience of Brooklyn under the Commission in existence a year ago, makes all the greater the feeling of relief caused by the appointment in January of this year by Mayor Chapin of a new Commission consisting of gentlemen known to be earnest friends of reform, and some of them familiar with the details of the Civil Service System, the Chairman Mr. Edward M. Shepard especially, having been a member of Mayor Low's Commission, and very active in its work.

As already stated, the State Commission appointed by Governor Cleveland gave place in December to a new Commission appointed by Governor Hill. The new Chief Examiner, appointed by this Commission, Mr. John B. Riley, had been previously Superintendent of Indian Schools under the National administration, and at an earlier date had some experience as a local examiner of applicants for positions as guard and keeper of the public prisons, under the State Commission. The annual report of the Commission has not yet been made public, but we are able to state that the number of examinations during the year was much larger than previously. Many difficulties in the application of the rules and in the administration of the System became evident to the late Chief Examiner, and the consideration of these led to much discussion by the Commission and to a conference between it and members of this Association which was held on the 13th of December. As a result of this Conference four bills intended to facilitate the administration of the law were drawn by the Committee on Legislation of the Association and were introduced into the Legislature. None of these have however been passed.

All the bills which have been passed since the date of our last Annual report have been detrimental to reform. At the close of last session two bills became laws — both relating to veterans. One of these, introduced by Senator Raines, still further extended the preference already given to veterans, both within and outside of the Competitive Schedules, and the other, introduced by Assemblyman Reitz, provided that no veteran in Brooklyn or Kings County should be removed without a hearing. This it is believed would imply a trial. During the present session a bill similar to the latter, but affecting the whole State, has been passed, and some other bills have been introduced seeking to undermine the reform in various ways.

There has been a vigorous agitation in the city of Buffalo, promoted more especially by Ex-Commissioner Henry A. Richmond, in favor of a bill reorganizing the Educational System of that city, and providing a method for the selection of teachers in

the public schools. This subject is one which has frequently occupied our attention and the result of the Buffalo movement will be watched with much interest. An address delivered by Mr. Richmond before the Buffalo Central Labor Union in advocacy of the proposed change, has just been printed by this Committee for distribution.

In this connection we may add that Superintendent Draper, having failed to obtain the assistance of the law drafted by him providing for uniform examinations for teachers in the public schools, in consequence of its veto by Governor Hill, has turned his energies into another channel for the purpose of attaining the same end through the voluntary co-operation of the County Superintendents, with very favorable prospects of success.

An opinion rendered by the late Attorney-General to the effect that the employees of the Department of Public Works and of the Department of Prisons are not subject to the State Civil-Service Rules, at least so far as they require competitive examinations, led the Committee to make a case for the purpose of testing the law, which case was brought in the name of Thomas G. Killeen against the Secretary of the Civil Service Commission before the General Term of the Supreme Court in the City of New York. The General Term rendered a decision against the position taken by the Association, and the case was then carried to the Court of Appeals where it was recently argued. The final decision has not yet been rendered.

A case has been made in the City of Rochester under the Municipal Rules, which in all probability will also be carried to the Court of Appeals, in which event the assistance of this Association may be required.

We cannot say that matters in the National Service show as favorable an aspect as they did at the time of our last annual meeting. The Commission remains as constituted then, but many circumstances seem to show a radical difference in opinion between the President of the Commission and his two associates, which cannot fail to hamper the Commission in the administration of the System.

The Annual Report which was expected more than a year ago, which was understood to be promised for the middle of 1887, has not yet made its appearance, and we are therefore without definite facts in regard to the Commission's work. The rules have been reconstructed and reissued in an improved systematic form, (though without some new features of importance which were proposed and which it was hoped would be adopted) and several steps have been taken by the majority of the Commission and several decisions have been announced by it which show a desire to strictly enforce the reformed system. Testimony taken before the Senate Investigating Committee in Philadelphia leads to the belief that treachery had been shown there on the part of at least one member of the local examining board, and suspicions of a similar character have arisen in New York and elsewhere; but it is exceedingly difficult to obtain evidence in such cases because of the unwillingness of parties to testify. Unquestionably very serious harm is done to the cause in some instances by political activity on the part of members of examining boards, leading to the impression on the part of applicants — true or false — that a political bias is to be expected in the action of the boards themselves. A flagrant instance of this character shown last summer, was the retention of membership in the Democratic State Committee by the Secretary of the Customs Examining Board in New York, and his attendance of a meeting of that Committee at Saratoga: a proclamation of his party affiliation sufficient to last without reinforcement, for an indefinite period.

A large number of changes within the classified Customs Service have been made in this City, and in relation to these it has been charged that many of them have been made for partisan reasons. Appointments and removals outside the classified service have been such as to give color to these impressions, which have gained weight from the connection of the name of Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Isaac H. Maynard, together with that of the Public Printer, with a circular recently addressed to postmasters in this State, calling upon them to perform partisan politi-

cal service. Against this abuse the Association warmly protested in resolutions adopted by the Executive Committee. These and other charges touching especially the conduct of the Surveyor's Department at this Port, have led to a determination on the part of the Select Committee of the United States Senate, of which Mr. Hale is chairman, to make an investigation, in which this Committee will endeavor to assist in all ways which may contribute to elicit and make public the facts.

Taking the Country at large, in those positions not covered by the Civil Service Rules, the changes have gone on with such steadiness, that the hopes cherished during the early days of this administration of a substantial gain during its term in the general stability of the service, have not been justified by the result. The disappointment felt on this account is tempered in part by the merited severity of public criticism upon unjust and unnecessary removals and appointments, and this criticism leads to the hope that at no distant day administrative officers may begin to realize the fatal weakness of such acts as a method in practical politics, as well as their wrongfulness from the point of view of public duty.

At the same time we gladly admit that important progress towards more business like, and therefore, non partisan methods has been made in the administration of the federal service. The beneficial effect of the Civil Service Act has been most marked. We had hoped that the operation of this act would have been largely extended. In this we have been disappointed. Party pressure has been so strong as to prevent such extension. This convinces us of the necessity of continued activity on the part of the associations throughout the country. Party leaders will only yield to the power of public opinion. And let it be always remembered that it is not the activity of parties to which we object. By all means, let the questions upon which the two parties are divided be discussed fully, and the intention of voters be directed to the arguments bearing upon them by all legitimate means. What we do oppose, is the use of the power of appoint-

ment and removal to promote the success of either party and the compulsion exercised by official superiors upon the political action of their subordinates.

During the current session a large number of bills relating to the Civil Service have been introduced into Congress, helpful or hurtful in their intention, as the case might be, but we believe that none have been passed. It does not now seem probable that any action of importance will be taken.

In Maryland and in Rhode Island bills have been prepared and discussed during the year, and in Philadelphia the system provided by the Bullitt bill has been inaugurated, while in Chicago and in Cincinnati strong hopes of the establishment of reformed methods, are cherished by the friends of reform. In Massachusetts the system has been subjected to repeated attacks by its enemies, but as yet they do not appear to have seriously shaken it, and its friends are hopeful that they will not be able to do so.

This Association was as usual represented by a number of its active members at the meeting of the National Civil-Service Reform League, held in Newport in August last. The interchange of views on the part of those from different localities for which these meetings afford opportunity, is always advantageous and it would be well if they were more largely attended. To make this more easy it has been determined to hold the next annual meeting in New York City on the 29th and 30th of May, and we trust that a large number of our members as well as of those of other Associations will find it convenient to be present.

Respectfully submitted,

EVERETT P. WHEELER,
Chairman.

WILLIAM POTTS,
Secretary.

New York, May 3, 1888.

Annual Statement of the Treasurer, Civil-Service Reform Association of New York.

Dr.

1887.			
April 21.	Balance on hand as per account rendered		$950 65
	Received for annual dues	$2,430 00	
	" " subscriptions	1,158 69	
	" " documents	10 76	
	" " int. from Trust Co.	19 90	
	" " amt. advanced for expenses (ret'd)	100 00	
			3,719 35
			$4,670 00
	Cash in Mechanics' Bank	$1,079 75	
	" " N. Y. Life Ins. and Trust Co.	538 23	
			$1,617 98

Cr.

EXPENDITURES.		
Rent of office and meeting-rooms	$349 96	
Salary of secretary	815 08	
" " T. G. Killeen	452	
Office expenses, including printing, stenographer, postages, etc., etc	820 01	
Lawyers' bills	425 47	
Subscriptions to *Civil Service Record*	176 50	
" " *Congressional Record*	8 00	
" " *Civil Service Reformer*	5 00	
		$3,052 02
Balance on hand this date		1,617 98
		$4,670 00

E. & O. E. IRA BURSLEY, *Treasurer.*

NEW YORK, April 23, 1888. *per* H. P. Gardner.

Daniel Webster and the Spoils System. An extract from Senator Bayard's oration at Dartmouth College, June, 1882. Per copy, 3 cts. Per 100, ... $1 50

The "Pendleton Bill." Bill to Regulate and Improve the Civil Service of the United States, as approved. Per copy, 3 cts. Per 100, $1 50

What has been done in New York and may be done elsewhere. Per copy, 1 ct. Per 100, - - - - - 30 cts.

The Reform of the Civil Service. Per copy, 1 ct. Per 100, 30 cts.

What is the Civil Service? (Card for distribution).

Annual Report of the C. S. R. A. of N. Y., May, 1883. Per copy, 3 cts.

The same for 1885. Per copy, - - - - - 3 cts.

The same for 1886. Per copy, - - - - 3 cts.

The same for 1887. Per copy, - - - - - 3 cts.

The same for 1888. Per copy, - - - - - - 3 cts.

Hon. Augustus Schoonmaker upon the Merit System.

The Workingmens' Interest in Civil Service Reform. Address by Hon Henry A. Richmond.

Constitution and By-Laws of New York Association.

Also a few copies of some early publications.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Civil Service in Great Britain. By Dorman B. Eaton. Per copy, 25 cts.

The Competitive Test. By Edward M. Shepard. Per copy, - 5 cts.

The Meaning of Civil-Service Reform. By Edward O. Graves, Per copy, - - - - - - - 3 cts.

Civil-Service Examinations. Being question papers with actual answers of successful and unsuccessful candidates. By R. R. Bowker. Per copy, - - - - - - - - 12 cts.

Report of the U. S. Civil-Service Commission, 1884.

The same for 1886.

Report of the N. Y. Civil-Service Commission, 1884.

The same for 1885.

The Same for 1886.

The same for 1887.

Also a few other miscellaneous publications.

Orders for the publications will be filled by WILLIAM POTTS, Secretary. 33 & 35 Liberty St., New York, or by G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS, 27 and 29 West 23d St., New York.

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HORACE E. DEMING.

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